

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-13 ISO-00 L-03 FRB-03 OMB-01
ITC-01 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 OIC-02 SIL-01 STR-04
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4545
INFO USMISSION GENEVA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0835

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, GY, UNCTAD
SUBJECT: UNCTAD: GUYANESE POSITION IN SUGAR CONFERENCE

REF: GENEVA 2950

SUMMARY: THE GUYANESE DELEGATE TO THE UN SUGAR CONFERENCE, GEORGE KING, ACCORDING TO FONMIN WILLS, HAS BEEN INSTRUCTED TO DISASSOCIATE GUYANA FROM THE POSITION BEING ADVOCATED BY CUBA. A CABLE FROM KING INDICATING HE WAS SUPPORTING THE CUBAN POSITION TRIGGERED WILLS TO INQUIRE CONCERNING THE US POSITION AT THE CONFERENCE AND SUBSEQUENTLY TO CABLE KING TO CHANGE HIS POSITION BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO WILLS, GUYANA DOES NOT WANT TO IRRITATE THE US OVER SUGAR AS IT WANTS FAVORABLE ACCESS TO THE US MARKET. END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN WILLS CALLED ME DURING THE EVENING OF APRIL 22 TO ASK THAT I COME TO HIS OFFICE THE FOLLOWING MORNING PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE SUGAR CONFERENCE AT GENEVA. WHEN I ARRIVED IN HIS OFFICE ON SATURDAY, WILLS SHOWED ME A COPY OF A CABLE FROM THE GUYANESE DELEGATE, MINISTER GEORGE KING, TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT CONTAINED KING'S CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTS ON POSITIONS OF VARIOUS DELEGATIONS AT THE CONFERENCE. IT SAID THE UNITED STATES POSITION WAS ENCOUNTERING SOME OPPOSITION. WHAT CONCERNED WILLS, HOWEVER, WAS THAT KING REPORTED THAT HE WAS SUPPORTING THE POSITION PUT FORWARD BY THE CUBANS. THIS, WILLS TOLD ME, HAD NOT BEEN THE GOG EXPECTATION OF WHAT KING SHOULD DO. HE INQUIRED CONCERNING THE US POSITION IN

THE NEGOTIATIONS AND I SHOWED HIM REFTEL.

2. I TOLD WILLS THAT IT APPEARED TO ME THAT IN THE SUGAR NEGOTIATIONS THE GOG HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT HE AND I HAD BEEN TALKING ABOUT REPEATEDLY IN RECENT WEEKS; THAT IS, TO WORK TOWARD ACCOMMODATION RATHER THAN ENGAGE IN CONFRONTATION ON ISSUES OVER WHICH WE HAD DIFFERENCES. THE US AND OTHER MAJOR SUGAR CONSUMERS WERE MAKING CONCESSIONS TO THE PRODUCERS AND THE PRODUCERS SHOULD REALIZE THIS. FOR ANY SUGAR AGREEMENT TO WORK IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ONE THAT WAS POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE IN THE UNITED STATES, PARTICULARLY TO THE US CONGRESS. THEREFORE FOR GUYANA TO SUPPORT A POSITION WHICH WOULD BE CONFRONTATIONAL RATHER THAN ONE LEADING TO ACCOMMODATION WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. WILLS SAID THAT HE AGREED AND WOULD INSTRUCT KING NOT TO FOLLOW THE CUBAN LINE. THE GOG DID NOT WISH TO IRRITATE THE US OVER SUGAR.

3. WILLS COMMENTED THAT GUYANA'S GOALS IN THE SUGAR NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO GET AS FAVORABLE TERMS AS POSSIBLE ON THE UNITED STATES MARKET, TO RETAIN ITS MARKETING AGREEMENT WITH ALGERIA (THE LATTER HAVE BEEN TRYING TO RENEGE ON THE AGREEMENT), AND BE ABLE TO SELL THE REST OF ITS SUGAR AS BEST IT COULD. THE SOVIET UNION WAS ACTING LIKE A HARD-HEADED BUSINESSMAN ON THE SUGAR QUESTION. IT HAD NOT BOUGHT GUYANESE SUGAR THIS YEAR AND HAD INDICATED IT WOULD NOT PAY PREMIUM PRICES FOR SUGAR. WHILE WILLS WAS DISCUSSING THE SOVIET
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ATTITUDE, I INTERRUPTED, SAYING I HAD HEARD A RUMOR THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD BOUGHT A LARGE SHIP-MENT OF GUYANESE SUGAR AT A VERY INFLATED PRICE. WILLS FLATLY DENIED THIS.

4. IN DISCUSSING KING'S POSITION, WILLS SAID THIS WOULD BE HIS LAST ATTENDANCE OF A TRADE CONFERENCE BECAUSE WILLS NOW HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRADE. KING STILL HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPORT LICENSING, BUT FELT SHAKY IN HIS POSITION AS MINISTER AND APPARENTLY WAS TRYING TO GRANDSTAND BY SUPPORTING THE CUBANS AS A WAY OF PLEASING RADICALS IN THE PNC AND THEREBY BOLSTERING HIS SAGGING FORTUNES IN GUYANESE POLITICS. KING WAS NOT A SOCIALIST AND HAD BEEN UNDER ATTACK FOR CORRUPTION.

5. ON APRIL 25, WILLS TOLD ME THAT, AFTER DISCUSSING THE MATTER WITH BURNHAM, HE HAD SENT A CABLE TO KING THROUGH HIS HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON INSTRUCTING HIM TO DISASSOCIATE GUYANA FROM THE CUBAN POSITION. IF WILLS

IS TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT THE RUSSIAN NOT HAVING
BOUGHT GUYANESE SUGAR AT AN INFLATED PRICE, THEN SOME
VERY PERSISTENT REPORTS CIRCULATING HERE ARE WRONG.
BLACKEN

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 25-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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